<u>Virtual Table</u>
Sample Issue/Project: New Park

<u>Information Gathering:</u>
Define objectives (even before info gathering)
- Identify benefits of a new park
- Conversations/surveys with the community
- Understanding the facts
- Identifying costs/cost-benefit analysis
- Benchmarking/comparable examples
- Laws/regulations/codes implicated
- Identify constraints
- Set expectations (e.g., scope)
- Educate community about budgets related to projects
- Use online opportunities
- Charrette to allow direct access to designers
- Treat all ideas equally, regardless of how they were submitted
- Ensure that one group can't hijack process
- Use a predictable process/let people jump in at any point (but not force a restart)
- Let people feel heard and that they still have a chance
- Tasks without well defined conclusion should have time limit
- Link to budget process

Time to move to next phase when we know:
- What it is
- Who it will serve
- What are the benefits
- How much it costs
- Why we're doing it
- Certain number of meetings/inputs have taken place

<u>Develop and Evaluate Options:</u>
- Check objectives
- Identify stakeholders
- Identify alternatives
- Explore budget options and educate community about budgets
- Charrettes with designers
- Involve school students
- Have meetings, but not too many meetings
- Have community meeting like tonight's

Recommendations:
- Communicate alternatives and rank them
- Explain what staff did not agree with and why
- Clear justification for recommendation
- Provide supporting data and references (technical matrix)
- Show how recs were reached (methodology)
- Meet residents where they gather (coffee shops, farmers' markets) – good for all phases
- Publicize recommendations and supporting material
- Make sure inputs are valued
- Explain what rest of the process will be and what city boards must review
- Sponsor social media discussions
- Set expectations for implementation
- Determine how options are reasonable
- Follow up if delays

Time to move to next phase when:
- Certain number of meetings have occurred
- Consensus?
- Timeline so it doesn't go on forever

Implementation and Maintenance
- Make sure there is a plan
- Periodic status reports to see if we're on target
- Citizen group to review implementation (broadly representative)
- Charrettes with designers
- Reflect connections to recommendations

Table 1:
Sample Issue/Project: City Budget

Information Gathering:
- Gather info from whole population
- Connect with partners/advocacy groups to gather info
- Door knock residents
- Deliberate polling surveys – face-to-face random sample
- 'Table tents' – info in public spaces
- Opportunity for citizens to speak at meetings, council – input thru web may not promote understanding

- Time to move to next phase when:
- Majority feels informed
- Understanding of the group
- Set limit/timeline for info gathering
- Have a sufficiently broad input

Develop and Evaluate Options:
- Opportunities to hear each other – <u>small group discussions</u>
- Deliberate polls including random sample of residents

- Vote at representative public meetings
- Legal requirements
- Establish timeline for process
- Timeline for meetings
- Have a sufficiently broad input

Recommendations:
- Have sufficiently broad input

Implementation and Maintenance:
N/A

Table 2:
Sample Issue/Project: Proposed Development

Information Gathering:
- Information gathering based on neutral community experts coming together to identify information, analytical processes and make recommendations
- Staff provides professional analysis and support
- Includes early dialogue on planning assumptions
- There is a basic set of facts that are needed before process goes very far
- Awareness building for general public

Time to move to next phase when:
- Consensus on –
  - Problem definition
  - Several courses of action/possible solutions
  - Implications/costs of alternative solutions

Develop and Evaluate Options:
- Use social media
- Available tools: online/digital, guest speakers/experts, open community meetings, online participation
- Opinions based on facts
- Open and not defensive on input

- Take feedback from above and write report (finding document)/working draft based on best interest or community as a whole with wide dissemination
- Opportunity for feedback
- Made revisions

Recommendations:
- Report to appropriate authority
- Community's responsibility is to support process and decision

Implementation and Maintenance:
- Decisions will be evidence based with staff analysis and public input in the best interest of the entire community

Table 3:
Sample Issue/Project: Master Plan for a Neighborhood

Information Gathering:
- Who is responsible? (City? Neighborhood? Private sector?) – Create working group
- Who are the stakeholders?
- Identify neighborhood concerns and issues and non-engaged folks: identify information gaps
- Develop outreach strategy to help reach different segments (old residents, new folks)
- Demographics and census info
- Identify active civic groups
- Use historical data and already developed plans

- Organize discussions forums
- Explain process from beginning to end
- Clarify expectations to clarify perception
- Explain available feedback and bringing up to speed-mechanism
- Gather best practices and apply to individual initiatives

Develop and Evaluate Options:
- Utilizing experts and best practices, based on info gathered, draft master plan
- Distribute for feedback
  - Organize expert roundtables/online Q&A forums
  - Clarify decision-making and how input was used
  - Checks/balances for vision of community
  - Identify unresolved issues
  - Financial considerations (city/private funding)
- Find different tools that most effectively can be used
  - Ensure mechanism for mediation around issues
  - Specifically reach out to disengaged group and create environment where they are comfortable contributing
- Revamp existing plans thru citizen feedback

- 2nd (?) draft goes to city for approval
- Approval received

- City planning dept. develops implementation plan with working group developed in Information Gathering (ongoing report out of progress with working group/city)

Recommendations:
- Create working groups around initiatives (representative of neighborhood and clarify their roles and responsibilities)
- Real time clicker-voting at forums
- Clarify process from beginning to end and explain <u>decision-making process</u> and criteria at outset
- Maximize use of electronic communication (cell phones)

Implementation and Maintenance:
- Plan/vision developed with community and supported by a budget
- Identified issues were/are being addressed
- Milestones, action items, key responsibilities defined
- Neighborhood identity clear
- Implementation proceeds in accordance to established standards
- Establish an ongoing dialogue
- Measurable progress and report-out

General note: Strong Facilitation

Table 4:
Sample Issue/Project: New School

Information Gathering:
- Demographics, PTAs
- Current and projected enrollment connected to development plans, births, etc.
- Identify/involve relevant business community
- Get general inventory of the communication methods, languages, frequencies (follow best practices for the community)
- Community-based decision-making about the type of school/targeted or focus of school based on needs of community (i.e., STEM, Arts, etc.)
- What resources are needed to address the needs of the community (e.g., early learning HeadStart, after school extended learning)
- Identify additional community uses for the space and consider other community needs (e.g., adult-sized chairs for civic meetings, scouting opportunities, etc.)
- Meeting sites nearby to discuss and plan the 'new school' – consider moving to Evaluate Options or Implementation

Time to move to the next phase when:
- Best practices considered
- Plans and budget timeline in place
- Public voice has been heard and subject matter expertise had time to gather all information

<u>Develop and Evaluate Options:</u>
- Assess available sites
- Develop a checklist to assess the local and state requirements, ordinances, guidance for a new school (e.g., play space, real estate availability)
- Develop a communication plan to inform and engage the local community (break down and target communications based on demographics and community needs)

Budget note: Ensure bonds pass referendum

<u>Recommendations:</u>
- Safe routes to school/walking school bus
- Communicate plan to include business associations (Chamber of Commerce, Arlandria, DRBA, etc.)
- Communicate via all possible community outlets
- Translation, minutes posted publically, reach out as needed
- Churches, rec centers, Facebook, social media
- Online email/Patch
- Identify community ombudsman archivist, reports to organize the information for the community
- Have cafeteria lunch reflect the cultural and ethnic background (food preferences)
- No matter which venue you turn to, you can find all the information aggregated and archived (e.g., at local library and/or other public location)
- Wider sidewalks and tree canopies
- Incorporate safe and secure environment

<u>Implementation and Maintenance:</u>
- Convene community meetings/forums (consider same location where all info is aggregated and archived)
- Develop an Ad Hoc committee/commission or 'Implementation Group' that sees the whole process through to completion, include representation from all stakeholder groups, jointly staffed by school board and city staff

Note: Everyone is smiling, the bell rings and the ribbon cutting provides nice photo op!

<u>Table 5:</u>
Sample Issue/Project: City Budget

<u>Information Gathering:</u>
- Start with basic questions that stimulate community thought and feedback
- Share the info in a way that makes the budget issues <u>relevant</u> to <u>them</u>
- Reach beyond the choir, the <u>un-usual</u> suspects.
- Assertive outreach to where they are! (babysitting, evenings)

- Visual imagery to bring budget text alive, understandable, relevant (visual analysis)
- Social media! Still needs to make it not just accessible but usable
- Multiple avenues to recieve info
- Community based, neighborhood based, 'field hearings'
- <u>Meaningful</u> engagement! Reformat meetings to pre-inform attendees and use meeting time for Q&A, dialogue

Develop and Evaluate Options:
- Put the budget development process through the same 'small area plans' process
- Have budget staff describe the process of how priorities are decided. What's the thinking behind the decision-making process? Tell the public!
- Share the master plan as the over-arching paradigm
- Inform public of points of influence (city staff? Boards? Commissions? Etc.)
- Summarize/synthesize meeting minutes
- Assurance that decisions are not pre-made by the time public is engaged

Recommendations:
- Format meetings with equitable (50/50?) time for professional staff, leadership and public input
- Implement process that utilizes the 8 principles
- Train public in tools to gather info, make analysis, and generate recommendations
- Press the button! Send info at every step of the way
- Make the principles actionable

Implementation and Maintenance
- Utilize social media (FB, Twitter, E-blasts)
- Continue virtual meeting formats like tonight
- Create a citizenry that is able to use all the info they (we) have access to
- Educate on process, tools and skills to gather, synthesize analyze and shape recommendations

Table 6
Sample Issue/Project: Proposed Development (notes: simplicity, codify, make the process transparent)

Information Gathering:
- Environmental Impact
- Stake holders
- Demographic
- Rationale

- Engage civic associations
- List serves
- Social media

- Surveys/polls
- Stakeholder meetings with online/phone integration

Develop and Evaluation Options:
- Provide 'impacts' of the proposals
- Options with pros/cons/cost
- Direct developer engagement with citizens
- 'Comment Resolution' i.e., why option(s) not selected
- Effective feedback for all thoughtful inputs

Recommendations:
- Cross section of communication paths to reach all citizens
- 'Keep it simple' so all can understand
Notes: benchmark against objective standards, engage the right subject experts, preferable unbiased/honest brokers

Implementation & Maintenance:
- Keep 'institutional knowledge' visible to both city staff and citizens
- Knowledge 'management' to keep history/record of decisions and rationale
Notes: contributes to institutional knowledge

General note: Overall – simplify/streamline the process and make it transparent/codified process

Table 7:
Sample Issue/Project: Master Plan for a Neighborhood

Information Gathering:
- Convene neighborhood and Alexandria community
- Early notice in process –
  - e-news (alerts)
  - other forms of media
  - go to civic associations
  - online surveys
  - gather data
- Engage all stakeholders, including developers
- Open meeting to introduce the idea of a new plan – before planning begins! *at the onset of any consideration
- Educate citizens about planning process and priorities

Develop and Evaluation Options:
- Landowner/developer presentations to citizens
- Neutral assessment of options/plans by professionals – not city staff (*ahead of community to any plan)
- Open site blog for comments

- Open community forum
- Determine (and communicate) critical junctures/timelines
- Innovative outreach

Recommendations:
- Go back (staff) (to citizens) for feedback *proactive while it's still open.
- Education – this is how we got here
- Include list of possible proffers before decided then check in with citizens
- Time limited iterative process

Implementation and Maintenance:
- Proactive communication by the city regarding plan status.
- Annual update on status of approved plans (Elec., media)
- Note changes or revisions

Table 8:
Sample Issue/Project: New Park
Notes: Pre-work – why do we need this [new school]? Opportunity to challenge it [City Budget]?
Who decided we need the park? Have a box over here [New Park] asking why.

Information Gathering:
- Most important
- Who are the stakeholders?
- Ask people closest to park what do they want?
- Group size depends on park
- What were the alternatives and objectives and why we chose this?
- Demographics of the area
- Get the participants
- Give background to everyone
- Survey citizens – with define of what we'll do with survey results
- What kind of park do you want?
- What are the parameters?
- Some on-line, but must be more inclusive
- Seek participants
- Let the stakeholders choose themselves
- Informed participation
- Unbiased info
- Open discussion and challenges
- Citizen participation early and often
- Create some urgency to get interest for participation

- Find out how people get their info. How does the info get out?
- Newspaper print. Don't leave it out!

Develop and Evaluate Options:
- What if we did nothing?
- Distill the info to realistic options
- Participants should be involved with this process too.
- Genuine participation
- Get additional input and feedback to evaluate
- Have stakeholders come up with options THEN bring in the city workers. (not city workers dictating the options)
- *Public hearings are too late

Recommendations:
- Reach out to the other groups to have them help get the info out
- Citizen participation in the entire process
- Have contingencies to make sure you get the proper input
- Email civic associations or other neighborhood mechanism to alert to the info gathering
- Enews
- Think outside the box to get MORE participation from all segments
- Look at best practices in other communities
- Post info at libraries – have executive summaries and translate.
- Publicize timelines - Make sure folks know (goes back to sense of urgency)
- Give enough notice – should be a policy (week prior to votes)
- Timely communications
- Update website so it's easier to find things

Note: TRANSLATION services

Implementation and Maintenance:
- Community planning board
- Build TRUST, integrity, and honesty

General notes:
- Citizen still needs to take some responsibility. Don't forget, as a citizen you could call and ask for information
- Sometimes the city can't talk about an item – but be transparent about that

Final thoughts:
- Think of all subsets – how can we ENERGIZE engagement
- Too many projects! Too many/too much – people can't keep up
- Civic engagement of YOUTH, the next generation
- Ad Hoc view of citizen participation should be more regular and planned!
- Before we finish this process, we should have a town hall meeting.

Table 9
Sample Issue/Project: New School

Information Gathering:
- Town hall meetings in community based locations, (e.g., churches, schools (PTA), Rec centers, daytime, night time, weekends, childcare)
- Door knocking to provide info and to invite to meetings
- Phone calls
- Improve outreach efforts
  - Commissions
  - Bus stops, flyers
  - How to know what is available for participation
- Debates about what the community wants
- How does this affect me?
- Community leaders? From different communities

Develop and Evaluate Options
- Community survey in major languages in city via libraries, rec centers, manager local retail outlets, door to door
- Focus groups – in various languages, various localities
- Panel of experts to explain to the community (pros/cons)

Recommendations:
- Letter writing campaign (city leaders/newspapers) office planning, school board
- Ongoing status updates to the community using
  - Print media
  - Social media
  - Texting
  - City alerts (advertise this more)
- Invite public to testify to support or oppose

Implementation and Maintenance
- Citizen advisory council on projects
- Attend school board/council hearings
- Ongoing focus groups in various languages, various locations with diverse groups to maintain integrity of the project/process

Table 10
Sample Issue/Project: New School

Information Gathering:
- Benchmarking (?)
- Capacity
- Census data

- Demographics
- Needs assessment

ACPS (lead and input):
- Community involvement
  - Survey
  - Town
  - Neighborhood
- Stakeholders (parents)
- Resources
  - Budget
  - People
  - City master plan
- Academic experts involvement from beginning

Develop and Evaluate Options
- Data analysis
- Location, etc.
- Surveys/feedback
  - SMEs
  - A&E
- Teachers
- Data analysis loop (for integrity)
- Gain consensus?

Recommendations:
- Options (A,B,C)
- Review with commissions
- TH meetings
- Yes/no decision
- Naming
-
Implementation & Maintenance:
- Build
- Districting
- Communication with stakeholders
- Change management

Note: Community involvement throughout

Table 11
Sample Issue/Project: Proposed Development

Information Gathering:
- Emphasize importance of face to face discussion/dialogue

- Priorities for development
- Go to each demographic to see what their voice is
- Type of development
- Legal issues
- Values
- Mail surveys
- Go to places people gather (grocery store, etc.)
- Resolve current deficiencies in reaching diverse communities
- Contact leaders of diverse communities
- Legal requirements for engagement
- Not all civic associations are good for engaging community

Develop and Evaluate Options:
- Design alternatives
- Evaluate options
- Usability
- Environment
- Econ feasibility
- Adaptability
- Sustainability
- Density/open space
- Appearance

- Email for communication
- Every contribution should be acknowledged <u>and</u> used
- Substantive responses

Recommendations:
- Stopping plan
- Conducting studies
- Re-evaluation
- Constant community feedback loop
- Communication with diverse population (limited English, persons w/disabilities)
- Streamline resolution of issues
- Equity statements on notices

Implementation and Maintenance:
- Timeline for development
- Continual progress reports/communications
- Any changes? Restart collaboration
- Impact on neighborhood of construction
- Monitoring and reporting
- Point person
- Mediate and resolve disputes

- Site visits

Table 12
Sample Issue/Project: Proposed Development

Information Gathering:
- Need to determine process if issue was suggested from city or community
- Public hearings
- Advisory group
- Public posting of information on web/etc. when project is 1st proposed
- Local newspapers – newsletters distributed via mail
- Civic associations
- Polling on regular basis

- Ask for feedback
- Balance with timing of project to ensure things don't slow down
- Teach process so public knows how the process works

Develop and Evaluate Options:
- Facilitated town hall meeting (public)
- Diagrams and graphic illustrations developed
- Budgets drafted
- Use clicker voting to ascertain true perspectives

Time to move to next phase when:
- Majority of participants are supportive of a course of action or particular option

Recommendations:
- Print and distribute proposed plan with recommendations
- Newspaper, online (web), public TV

Time to move to next phase when:
- Project is formally approved
- budget $ are allocated

Implementation and Maintenance:
- Advisory committees/commissions
- e-news

- Evaluate implementation
- Evaluate overall process
- Make professional adjustments if needed

Table 13
Sample Issue/Project: Master Plan for a Neighborhood

Information Gathering:
- Identify and explain stakeholders very early in process
- Publicize issue/project (newspaper, etc.)
- Go to civic associations, CBOs, bus associations, chamber, etc.
- Public Forums
- Brainstorming sessions with citizens, businesses, city staff, developers - would help to get younger residents involved with childcare/food
- Stakeholders prioritize options

Develop and Evaluation Options:
- City staff summarize (top priority) options – must include true cost analysis
- Present analysis to stakeholders
- Have more public meetings to gather feedback
- Re-evaluation priorities and iterate process if necessary

Recommendations:
- Publicity about outcome
- Public outreach for any additional input/comment
- Include prior history and recommendations

General Notes:
- Document process all along the way.
- We need to use a different word other than 'stakeholder' that all residents would identify with.
- The planning Commission Approval Process should not have to approve at first meeting
- The comments from the commissioners in response to public comment should guide an iteration of the plan
- PC work sessions almost never include public comment – only staff presentation
- In general, all of the city's boards, commission, work sessions, etc., need a well-defined procedures for public input that is timely
-

Implementation & Maintenance

> N/A

Table 14:
Sample Issue/Project: New Park

Information Gathering:
- Survey – do we want/need park or (??) areas
- Fliers for effected households
- Website/emails

- Civic association (multiple meetings)
- Community meetings
- Direct mail
- Libraries/notices

Time to move to next phase when:
- Survey – representative sample has responded
- Adequate amount of time given
- Major issues addressed
- Consensus reached
- Public hearing

Develop and Evaluate Options:
- Surveys
- Fliers
- Reports/research
- Website/emails
- Civic associations; churches
- Community meetings
- Mailer
- Notices in various places/newspapers
- Virtual ways to respond

Time to move to next phase when:
- Adequate and reasonable time given
- Consensus
- Adhere to budgetary time limits

Recommendations:
- Choose representatives
- clicker voting
- community votes

Time to move to next phase when:
- After vote
- Decisions reached

Implementation and Maintenance:
- Opening ceremony
- Community feedback when necessary

Table 15:
Sample Issue/Project: Transportation Improvements

Note: People need to be a part of creating the list of issues or projects
- Tell people how the list is created
- These committees, boards, this master plan, eco-cities initiative, citizen suggestion
- How do residents' get items onto this list
- People need to be involved in master planning efforts because that's when our priorities as a city are set
- People need to know where ideas come from
- List generated by pressures from the public- needing action; sometimes things like BRAC, sometimes due to a lot of rezonings in one area that might change an area significantly

Information Gathering:
- IO who we are collecting info from
- Meetings where people can get to them - *point of input must be accessible to all
- Go to the people – at places where people are not participating
- What is needed for each culture or population (bus riders, ethnic groups, etc.)
- Find key people in each community
- Brainstorming – anything goes
- Moderated online comment boards

Time to move to next phase when:
- Standards need to be set to allow for the ability to judge/move on certain topics
- Time – depends on nature of project; other organizations (federal funding)
- People need to understand the timeline from the start - *communicate this to the public
- Must move forward at a certain point – not everyone will get it when you move forward
- 'Not being heard' is being said, but what they should be saying is 'you're not going along with my opinion'

Develop and Evaluate Options:
- Use constraints – some things aren't possible (physically and feasibly)
- Further participation – dot voting (nominal group technique) or clicker voting at meetings
- Why do we have staff if we don't trust their expertise to develop and evaluate options
- Staff may be the expert, but may not know the community to be affected
- COLLABORATION between staff and community
- Create a useful dialogue – not just being 'talked at'
- Everyone has to get their say, but can't be allowed to monopolize
- Cooperation and listening to each other
- Facilitated workshop – trying to narrow down the options

Time to move to the next phase when:
- The list is short enough
- People stop coming to meetings

- Not everyone will like the outcome
- Must accept that you won't get everything you want in life
- Meaningful engagement is success – ok as long as you can tell people why the certain outcome was reached

Recommendations:
- Public is involved in making recommendations – this goes beyond simply sharing staff's recommendations
- People will not always agree that the recommendation is what the group came up with
- Include decision-making process in the recommendations
- Unbiased facilitators, but when meeting, everyone has a bias
- Participants need to disperse info in pieces with the long reports – all departments should be used to reach out to their contacts/populations
- Getting the word out must be a big effort with conscious outreach to diverse groups
- Recognize that everything that happens in the city affects us all (i.e., traffic changes affect the schools)
- Ensure that all languages/translations are available
- Just go in – need to find one person in the specific community that you are trying to reach out to
- Need ways to develop understanding

Time to move to next phase when:
- Need/for effort put into the process should reduce at each stage
- Once you have those who are interested identified, city needs to provide ways to access the info

Implementation and Maintenance:
- Community must see action
- Need to get past idea that not all have access to internet – libraries provide access
- People need to take on responsibility of getting the info
- e-newsletters
- word of mouth – one person in the community reports back

General notes:
- No online polls – these are self-selected and not statistically significant
- 3 main languages are spoken in Alexandria; 90 languages in TC Williams
- People who want to be engaged will be engaged
- Some people will only participate if it's hot button

Table 16:
Sample Issue/Project: New School

Information Gathering:
- Surveys
- Meetings
- Needs assessment
- PTA
- School board input
- Headstart
- Rec centers
- Sporting events
- Local gathering places/barber shop
- Churches, mosques
- Grocery stores
- Library
- Farmers' markets
- Civic associations
- Personal networking
- Flyers
- Planning committee available and active listeners and absorbing info. during community meetings

Develop and Evaluate Options:
- Small focus meetings in densely populated buildings in various languages
- School board would synthesize and disseminate information back to involved groups/stakeholders
- Technical input from architects and engineers
- Evaluations taken back to groups
- Planning commission – develop plan to rec

Recommendations:
- Accountability
- Reach out to some groups to disseminate info and solicit feedback
- City council
- Insure that a diverse population is ?? the information
- Public hearing
- Planning commission votes
- City council votes

Implementation and Maintenance
- Groups continuously involved